

WHAP – How to Write a DBQ – Step-by-Step

Part 1 – Planning

- **Read and understand the prompt.**
 - Underline any key words in the prompt that indicate what you are going to look for in the documents.
 - Remember: you will be responsible for making arguments that **directly respond** to the task set out for you in the prompt.
- **Read and annotate the documents.**
 - Underline key words or phrases that illustrate the meaning of the document.
 - Make a note next to the document indicating what the document shows you in response to the topic.
 - Note any possible **Extended Analysis (POV)**.
 - Write the number of any other documents that support a similar argument or corroborates what the document says.
- **Organize** the documents into **AT LEAST THREE** substantial groups based on the arguments the documents can support in response to the prompt.
 - Look for similarities among the evidence in each document.
 - You may use a document in more than one group.
 - A group must contain at least TWO documents to count, but groups do NOT need to all have the same number of documents.
 - Depending on the prompt, your groups will often be related to, or in opposition to each other. This is good. You want your essay to show many possible interpretations of the historical event that is featured in the prompt.

Part 2 – Writing the Introduction

- **Thesis Statement**
 - The last 2-4 sentences of your introduction should be your thesis statement.
 - The thesis should explain ALL of the arguments you will make based on the documents.
 - Begin your thesis with one of these words. This will lead you to present your arguments in a logical, strong way.
 - W = While
 - A = Although
 - D = Despite
 - E = Even Though

Part 3 – Writing the Body Paragraphs

1. Begin the paragraph with a **topic sentence** that summarizes the first argument/group you intend to explain. This should be similar to the way you described the argument in your thesis statement.
2. Next, write an explanation of the first document in the group **explaining how it serves as evidence that supports the argument** for the body paragraph.
 - Refer to the sample essay for examples.
 - Do not quote extensively from the document.
 - Identify the document by **author, title, and date**.
 - Also cite the document by number in parentheses after you have explained it.

3. Next, write a **POV** for that is relevant for the document. See the sample essay or the **POV Ideas** handout for examples of this.
4. If you can think of an **Additional Document** that would directly respond to or clarify the document, explain it now. See **Additional Document** handout or the sample essay for examples.
 - Your additional document must theoretically be able to exist in order to count.
 - Don't just state who you would like to hear from. Explain what you might learn from the additional document that would be useful for the DBQ.
5. Next, write a transition that connects the document you just wrote about with the next document you will use in that same group of documents for that same paragraph. If the document you have just explained is the only one supporting this argument then you may skip this step. You may begin the transition by saying something like these examples:
 - This effect was also reflected in the speech by....
 - This rejection towards... was also seen in the words of....
 - The events described in this document were confirmed by...
 - This position of... was also supported by the document from...
6. Repeat steps 2-5 until you have explained all the documents you included in this group.
7. If you know any specific historical evidence that is NOT included in the documents that supports your argument you should also include it, and explain how it supports the argument for the paragraph.
8. To end your body paragraph, rewrite the argument that these documents just proved followed by an opening line that suggests the next argument you intend to make in the next body paragraph. You may end the paragraph by saying something like this: "However, religion was not the only motivation for the rebellion..."
9. Repeat these steps for all remaining body paragraphs you need to write.
10. If you did not explain your **Additional Documents** in any of your paragraphs, you may write a separate body paragraph that contains this.

Part 4 – Writing the Conclusion

- Rewrite your thesis, perhaps making it more detailed or clear in case you wrote it too quickly in your introduction.